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Military Match and the Importance of Primary Care

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{ONE COMMENT}

By Lt. Kevin Bernstein, M.D., M.M.S., Family Medicine Resident at Naval Hospital Pensacola, Fla.



Now that the holidays are over, the excitement of winter cheer is exchanged for a different kind of excitement for all of those waiting for the results of [the Graduate Medical Education \(GME\) Selection Board](#) (aka “military match”).

The GME Selection Board is used to determine where senior medical students and Navy physicians currently in residency training or out in the fleet will continue with their medical training within internships, residency programs, fellowships, flight/dive medicine, or in the fleet as general medical officers.

As someone highly involved in promoting primary care, this time of year is also very exciting for me because of how competitive the Navy's match is for family medicine residency positions each year.

With only six months of residency training, I can already tell how much the Navy appreciates family medicine as a specialty as well as primary care as a whole. Look no further than the [Medical Home Port](#) program to justify how much the Navy is devoted to providing up-to-date, evidence-based, cost-effective care to our sailors. In order to offer high-level care, it is imperative that the Navy invests in producing a highly-functioning and capable primary care workforce. In comparison to medical training within the civilian community, the Navy produces an optimal primary care and specialty workforce ratio for our active duty, retirees, and dependents. This allows for the optimization of primary care access without the fragmentation and over-reliance of specialty care that is currently occurring in the civilian world.

Young medical officers choosing their specialties are taking notice to the practice redesign occurring by those involved with Medical Home Port implementation. In fact, the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) is [consistently honored by the American Academy of Family Physicians](#) as being ranked in the top 10 of all medical schools throughout our country in its percentage of graduating seniors choosing to become family physicians, the only specialty solely dedicated to providing primary care. With implementation of Medical Home Port, a concept that is being implemented as the patient-centered medical home in the civilian world, those choosing family medicine in the Navy can be confident that their training for practice will allow them for smooth transition to civilian

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practice when and if they decide to leave the military.

Here at my [family medicine residency program at Naval Hospital Pensacola](#), we had a very successful match, selecting candidates to fill all of our GME-1 and 2 slots with highly talented naval medical officers, including several graduating medical students, several current residents continuing through with residency training as well as those coming back from the fleet to continue their training and eventual board certification in the specialty of Family Medicine. As one of several sites in the entire military with [Level 3 NCQA recognition](#) as a Medical Home (the gold standard for medical home certification and highest level functioning medical home rating), our residency program is highly attractive to those seeking medical training within a transformed practice setting performing at the highest level achievable for preparation to practice family medicine in the fleet as well as in the community. We are looking forward to their arrival aboard!

In the military, we are truly blessed to have a community that truly recognizes the importance of primary care. This is reflected in the choices that our Naval Medical Officers make when selecting family medicine as their profession and career. Bravo Zulu to all those who matched!

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